

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

240227Z Jun 05

ACTION DRL-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	USNW-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00
	EAP-00	EB-00	EUR-00	UTED-00	VC-00	TEDE-00	INR-00
	IO-00	L-00	VCE-00	AC-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OES-00
	OIC-00	OIG-00	OMB-00	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00
	P-00	SP-00	SS-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	T-00	IIP-00
	PMB-00	PRM-00	G-00	SAS-00	/000W		

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FM AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1703  
INFO AMEMBASSY HANOI PRIORITY  
ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

UNCLAS HO CHI MINH CITY 000687

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KIRF](#) [VM](#) [RELFREE](#) [HUMANR](#)

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON IMPRISONED MENNONITE PASTOR NGUYEN HONG QUANG

1. (SBU) Le Thi Phu Dung, wife of imprisoned Mennonite pastor Nguyen Hong Quang, told us June 23 that she has just returned from visiting her husband in his new prison in Dak Lak Province. Quang was transferred from Bo La prison in Binh Duong Province, adjacent to Ho Chi Minh City, to Dak Trung prison in Cu Mga district, Dak Lak on June 10. (Dak Trung prison is about 10 kilometers from Buon Me Thuot, the provincial capital.) Dung told us that her husband seemed thinner and complained of some skin and stomach problems, for which he requested the family send medicine. Otherwise, he appeared lucid and normal. She said that the final member of the "Mennonite Six," preacher Pham Ngoc Thach, remained in Bo La prison.

2. (SBU) Quang told his wife that he was housed in a communal cell with over 100 prisoners. He complained about being bullied and physically abused by the gang leaders in the cell. Quang said he was slated to begin a prison labor detail soon with other inmates. Dung said that the prison administration in Dak Lak is allowing her to send Quang food and supplies, a welcome change of policy from his old prison.

3. (SBU) Dung also reported that police harassment of her house church resumed on Sunday, June 19, following a two-week lull. On June 19, police interrupted the Sunday service for 16 persons. Police did not detain any worshipers, but summoned Dung for an "informational interview." During that discussion, which took place on June 21, the police informed her that her congregation was not allowed to gather at that particular site because of "security concerns." Officials did not offer Dung an alternative meeting point.

4. (SBU) Meanwhile, officials of the HCMC Committee for Religious Affairs confirmed that they have received and are considering the registration application of a faction of the Vietnam Mennonite Church headed by Pastor Nguyen Quang Trung under the new legal framework on religion. (Note: "Registration" legally grants the Mennonite group headed by Pastor Trung limited rights including: organizing religious services, conducting ceremonies, carrying out missionary work and preaching at registered religious establishments, but it is still short of official "recognition" for the denomination. End note)

5. (SBU) Comment: We continue to press HCMC officials to cease their harassment of Pastor Quang's house church. Nonetheless, it remains an exception to an improved atmosphere for house churches throughout southern Vietnam over past months. Quang's treatment in prison -- labor and being placed in a group cell -- is standard treatment for regular prisoners in Vietnam. In cases of political prisoners, such as Father Nguyen Van Ly or Nguyen Dan Que, the democracy and human rights activists were held in smaller cells, often in solitary confinement, and were not required to perform prison labor.

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